

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2001
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

<http://people.delphi.com/dpj/a-one.htm>
<http://www.icwhen.com/aone/>
<http://almag.atari.org>
Now available:
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari>

=~ =~ =~ =

~ Intel Readies 2 GHz! ~ Web Genealogy Grows! ~ AppleWorks For OS X!
~ Hackers Profit By Spam ~ MSN Messenger Spotty! ~ News From AUN!

-* Microsoft Case Still Goes On *-
-* Apple Puts Power Mac G4 Cube On Ice *-
-* Napster Suspends Service To Install Filter *-

=~ =~

->From the Editor's Keyboard

"Saying it like it is!"

What a weird week here in New England! The first half of the week we had wonderful weather, during the day. In the evening, it turned ugly! The thunder and resulting electrical light show was something to behold! And then it was over as quickly as it appeared. The 4th of July was okay, but we rarely saw the sun. The annual fireworks gala over the Charles River went off without a hitch with rain threatening all day. The latter part of the week was almost a repeat of the first half, minus the lightening. The good news was that the humidity was down.

You may have noticed over the years that Joe Mirando and I give each other subtle digs within our editorials. It's always done in jest and we each never really knows when to expect it! And for some strange reason, we always seem to know what the other is going to write about as we both usually make reference to what the other has written before seeing each other's article. Now that's spooky! Well, Joe caught up to me in Instant Messenger the other night and asked me why I hadn't "retaliated" for some of his comments the past few weeks. With an evil grin, being the antagonist that I am, I told him that I was biding my time for when he wasn't ready! Joe may kid me about my various outdoor activities, but you have to realize that he's just jealous. While Joe may have the convenience of having a landlord who takes care of the lawn and gardens, he doesn't have the luxury of really enjoying the full impact of these things. Sure, he can marvel at how good (or poor) these things look, but it's not the same when someone else does the work. There's satisfaction in knowing the work that went into a project, and the results of that labor. So I think it's time for Joe to go into debt up to his eyeballs and buy his own house, have it own him rather than him own it, and enjoy the time and work to keep it up! <g> Then again, he was on vacation this past week; I bet he didn't get much accomplished! I bet he sat around, had a few drinks, and watched his fake pet (a prairie dog!) run around the house! <g & d>

The news has been slow during this holiday week, but interesting nonetheless. Microsoft still has its hands full, and probably will for some time to come. It appears that Napster, as many knew it, is coming to end as we speak. Apple's Cube hits the "classics" pile. JagFest 2K1 was a huge success from all of the reports I've seen to-date. Still no official word from Infogrames on their change to Atari, although the hints are still teeming. And this was a slow week!

Until next time...

=~=-~=-

AtarIRC v1.19 Released

Lonny Pursell has released a new version of AtarIRC.
This version has some bug fixes.

To Download visit:
<http://www.bright.net/~atari/>

The Atari Times Has Been Updated

- * NEW! Profile Atarian: Mark Androvich
- * NEW! Galaga Review by Brian Rittmeyer
- * NEW! Details on the Lynx book with a new .PDF sample file!
- * NEW! Lynx Manuals between APB and Desert Strike.
- * NEW! JagFest Poll!

See you there!

--
Greg

Visit The Atari Times Website!
<http://www.ataritimes.com>

New Articles in June Issue of MyAtari Magazine

HOT NEWS!

MyAtari magazine has just added two new articles to its June 2001 issue.
To read them, please visit www.myatari.net ;-)

Matthew Bacon, Editor

CCAG 2001 Review

For a review of the CCAG 2001 with some pictures from the event..
Visit Addie's Atari Page at:
<http://www.addie.cjb.net/>

New version of M Available

I am happy to announce that we now have a new version of M, the interactive performing Algo-comp application.(by Eric Ameres and David Z) The previous version was a "cracked" copy that the programmers still gave their consent for a download. However, Phillip Louie (of the Atari-Midi mailing List) was able to supply us with a unprotected "legal" copy of M. It is now on my site. See link below. This version works well in Steem as well as a Falcon and TT with no crashes (yet!) So good news for Atari-Midists!

Link: <http://sites.netscape.net/timconrardy/m.htm>

Anybody use M?

Tim Conrardy

July Release of Eureka

Hi all,

I just released on my web page, the July version of Eureka.

It's a 2D Graph Describer, and a 3D Modeller. The major improvement of it, is that multitasking is better handled with Magic Mac. You will see that the desk of Eureka is disappearing. The software is better integrated in a adequate environment.

I'm also launching a call. If somebody that would have both knowledge in Maths and French, would be so kind as to help me to translate the text in the formulas of Eureka, it would be nice. The formulas in themselves are not a difficulty, but the comment on it is for the moment in French, and it may be an obstacle for many people. The 2D curves, and 3D surfaces are in the *.FMU files, and it is plain text files. That can be edited by a simple text editor. My knowledge in international mathematics are two basic, so I need help. Thanks in advance for your help ...

Best regards,

-- Francois LE COAT

<http://eureka.atari.org>

GEM GFA-Basic Editor Challenge Ended

The GFA Challenge contest on my web site has come to an end.

Vuk & Co. is the winner of this challenge!

He has provided a solution within the contest rules and will be rewarded with the money noted above. His entry was a small l1st2gfa.ttp conversion program. He has even managed to solve the small problem with the INLINE command. To obtain this program you must contact me directly and request it.

If you made a pledge I will be contacting you shortly to make arrangements for pledge collection.

I would like to thank a lot of people:

...everyone that contacted me with ideas, information, suggestions, encouragement, and support!

...everyone who made a pledge!!

...and especially Vuk & Co. for his brilliant work which will extend the life of GFA-Basic into the future!!!

Lonny Pursell

http://www.bright.net/~atari/html/gfa_gem.htm

Creation of a Heroes of the Might & Magic / Settlers Atari Clone Mailing list

Creation of an HF strategical game for ATARI 640*4(8/0)*8 A new group (mailing list+chat+calendar+files serv.+...) was created in order to chat about the creation of a Heroes of the Might & Magic / Settlers (PC) like ATARI game. A game in 640*4(8/0)0*8 for Falcon/Milan/Hades/Medusa... This would be a strategic game which take place in a Heroic Fantasy world. This involves magical beings, war, treaties, a lot of non human creatures likes elves, dwarves, sprites, vampires... Well, that's we will discuss about : so... We are waiting for co-creators.

A lot of graphic artists. A few good C/ASM coders.

And any other atari users interested and motivated which wish to help the realization of such a game.

The more people willing to help, the faster it's realization will be (we bet on quality for this production, otherwise, there's only a rather limited interest).

Our computers need a good game of that king.

COE2 and Civilization were good, but graphically rather limited, slow and specific to ST/ ST/Falcon.

NOT serious people are not welcome, but anyway, we are ATARI owners and users !!!

Creation 4 FUN rules !!!!!

And always remember ATARI is good 4 U !!

Hylst

Post message: atarihfstratgame@yahoogroups.com

Subscribe: atarihfstratgame-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Unsubscribe: atarihfstratgame-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

List owner: atarihfstratgame-owner@yahoogroups.com

On June 29th, 2k1 Atari Video Club/Jaguar Community United (AVC/JCU) has announced starting with Vol. 12 #1 (which will be in June 2002) of The Atari Zone Fanzine that the fanzines will be available in PDF format and it will also be available on-line at the club's website.

Also this will also end the E-zine since the fanzine will be taking its place. (Vol.4 n.6 will be the final e-zine) For those who still want the regular print version don't worry Daniel Iacovelli, AVC/JCU chairperson & Editor of The Atari Zone Fanzine, has mentioned that he will still continue the normal subscription basis for those who want the Print version sent to their home. He also mentioned that PDF version would be available on-line bi-monthly just like it's print version.

Also he did mention that the fest issue will only be available by request and will be in black in white (this might change though).

Daniel M. Iacovelli
AVC/JCU chairperson
editor of the Atari Zone fanzine
AVC Online: <http://avconline.atari.org>

Atari800Win PLus 2.8 Released

There is Atari800Win PLus 2.8 available for download.

Unfortunately, the release is still based on the kernel version 1.0.6. It means that the Daniel Noguerol's extensions and the Diamond, Sparta Dos X and XEGS cartridges support have not been implemented yet.

See the included help file for the complete release notes.

Visit the Atari800Win homepage

http://www.atari-area.net/PLus/index_us.htm

<http://www.a800win.atari-area.prv.pl/>

=~~~=-

PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, vacation week is finally here. It's nice to not have to go to your regular job, but I've got to tell you... I'm tired! I've done so much running around and little odds and ends that I end up more tired than if I had just gone to work. I haven't really gotten to pay attention to any of my hobbies this week either.

I had plans to bake some bread, maybe some bagels (my 'signature' Jalapeno bagels are THE BEST), do some work on my web pages, finish

polishing that telescope mirror I've been telling you about off and on, and a slew of other things.

Unfortunately, most of that has yet to come to pass. Now that the week is coming to an end, all I can really do is look back at the good intentions I had at the beginning of the week.

Don't get me wrong... I've gotten lots of things done during this vacation. Just not any of the things that I had planned on. That's the way it goes, I guess.

I haven't seen the new Steven Spielberg movie "A.I." yet, but I must confess that I find the discussion about whether or not we'll ever be able to create intelligence digitally.

It seems that our society has a hard enough time creating intelligence BIOLOGICALLY... you know... the old-fashioned way<grin!

Perhaps it is time to think seriously about not only how to create digital intelligence, but also how we should treat such entities when the time comes. Will they be our intellectual equals? There's no way to answer that at this point. Will we allow them to be our social equals? I doubt it... not at first, anyway. Look at the way we have treated each other up to this point in our history.

I remember a conversation with John Eidsvoog many years ago when the subject of artificial intelligence came up. John chuckled and said that he had heard an interesting thought on the subject, and repeated it to me:

"Asking if computers think is like asking if submarines swim."

That is certainly something to think about for the time being, but we don't even really understand the nature of human intelligence. It's really hard to study something that you can't touch.

So given that we can't define or even explain our own intelligence, how will we deal with whatever it is we end up creating? Only time will tell, I guess.

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

James Haslam posts this about using MagiC6:

"One of the offline members of the Cheshunt Computer Club has been having a weird problem with his STE.

The problem is that when using MagiC v6.01 (Jinnee or MagxDesk) most of his high density floppies exhibit the "Data on drive may be damaged" messages when trying to run programs on these disks.

However in TOS (v2.06) these messages do not appear and programs on these disks work normally.

The STE has 4Mb of RAM, and the TUS (The Upgrade Shop - a former UK dealer) 1.44Mb floppy drive modification. He also has the TUS

switchable TOS upgrade (v1.6x/v2.06), which was installed at the same time as the HD mod.

Of course we've tried to eliminate any clashing programs by running a clean setup, just MagxBoot and the TUS_FDC.PRG (the driver program for the mod) and no accessories/CPXes loaded, but the problem still persists.

Does know if there was a problem with the driver program or perhaps if it is incompatible with MagiC?"

Denis Huguet asks James:

"Have you tried to start TUS_FDC.PRG after Magic has been loaded (from the start directory of magic or even from the desktop) ?"

James replies:

"He didn't have one at the club.

I'm wondering perhaps that MagiC perhaps takes up too many system resources for the 1.44Mb clock to work?"

Dr. Uwe Seimet jumps in and asks:

"How would MagiC be able to negatively influence the clock frequency of the floppy controller, which is set by hardware? Or do I misunderstand you?"

James replies:

"Someone suggested that perhaps the mod only just worked on an STE and that adding MagiC to the load on the system tipped it over the edge of non-working?"

Uwe tells James:

"I simply cannot see how any software (and MagiC is just a piece of software) would influence the clock frequency of the floppy controller hardware, which is software-independent."

Lyndon Amsdon explains his thoughts to Uwe:

"What I thought (when I talked to him) is that perhaps that the chip is only just working in 16mhz mode as some can only take the increased frequency and the way Magic accesses the FDC (in optimised assembler?) may make the timings slightly wrong."

Uwe explains:

"I'm sorry, but this simply does not make sense. MagiC is not the only software accessing the floppy controller in optimised assembler. Other software (e. g. older versions of DISKUS or tools based on the floppy code in the "Scheibenkleister II" book) does the same and there is no problem at all. There is not much of a timing anyway because the FDC reads/writes data more or less on its own by DMA when it receives an appropriate command. "Scheibenkleister II" contains the details."

Hallvard Tangeraas jumps in and posts:

"The strange thing is that all of this seems to ring some bells. I believe I also had problems with my 1.44Mb disk drive (when using HD disks) only under MagiC, but NOT under plain TOS 2.06

Very strange indeed!

I'm desperately trying to find some old email and/or news messages I wrote about this, and possibly got some replies/help.
I will post them here if I find them.

Nothing surprises me when it comes to computers. Even the totally impossible is sometimes possible!"

Greg George asks about replacing his 1040's sound chip:

"I'm fairly certain the sound chip in my 1040STE has been toast for awhile. I was having problems with the floppy being able to write files. Sometimes it would work, other times it wouldn't.

Today I hooked up the sound cable and there's a truly annoying buzzing instead of silence. So, I'm pretty sure it's flat dead now.

How difficult is it to replace the sound chip in this system? Is it soldered to the board or socketed?

Any recommendations would help a lot. I really need the use of the floppy!"

Lyndon Amsdon tells Greg:

"I've seen a STE with the yamaha socketed and I think this is very rare.

Chances are you won't have it socketed and it is around 28 pin or so so it's not easy or fun.

...have you tried a printer on it as this is also handled by the Yamaha. It might confirm it is this chip. When you say it has problems writing, is it only writing? Have you tried another floppy drive or external one? In the STE the DMA chip *also* handles sound and floppy drive so it could be this messing up."

Steve Sweet tells Greg:

"I'd be looking elsewhere first, such as a power supply problem.

I think you'll find there not just the one chip involved in sound generation.."

Greg now asks about copying files from an ST to a PC:

"What's the easiest way to do this without a floppy? (If you didn't see my other post: My sound chip is bad rendering the floppy useless.)

I have a STOS game that is 95% complete, but I need to get it off of the ST and onto a PC emulator to finish it. I was thinking of using a null-modem cable to connect them together using two terminal programs on each end for the transfer. (But I usually don't have much luck with that kind of thing.)

I know that's pretty much the only way, but I was hoping someone out there knew a better way?"

Lyndon Amsdon tells Greg:

"You could use a parallel cable to connect the two but if the sound chip has blown then your parallel may not be working! Use a null modem cable and a terminal like Connect on the ST side along with HSmodem in the auto folder. Then on PC use Hyperterminal as part of Windows, or as I prefer, QModem from DOS (far better in my humble opinion!)."

Edward Baiz tells Greg:

"There are two programs that come to mind. One is Ghostlink. It requires a Null Modem cable and comes with a program for the PC as well as one for the ST. The other is PARCP. It does it's think use the parallel printers and needs a special cable. I bought the cable from the author and it works great."

Derryck Croker tells Edward (and the rest of us):

"I bought a cheap cable from a computer fair after checking that the plugs could be opened (ie not moulded). It's only a question of swapping two of the wires around in one of the plugs."

Greg gets things cooking and posts:

"Well, I tried the ole' null-modem thing... Unfortunately for me I'm using a hacked cable and it's pretty messy to look at. Anyway, what I had seemed to work: I would click Receive in Hyperterminal on the PC side and the ST (using AnsiTerm) would pop up with the select file box. I'd select my file and then nothing would happen. As far as I can tell, the settings are the same on both ends: 8 bits, 1 stop bit, & no flow control.

I'm also using the bare-bones setup for the cable.

Wire 2 is crossed with 3.

Wire 3 is crossed with 2.

Wire 7 is the ground connected to itself.

Wouldn't the ST work with a basic setup like this?

I said in my earlier post how I never have any luck with this null-modem thing. It's Kryptonite, I tell you."

Lyndon tells Greg:

"OK, so you don't use flow control but remember that speed also matters so select both terminals at either 19200 bps or 9600 bps. Also make sure both are setup up for the right transfer protocol, ie Zmodem or Xmodem.

To check, see if typing hello or something in one terminal appears on the other terminals screen. If this works then it's a simple (well sometimes) case of adjusting transfer protocols."

Bob Retelle, an old hand at transfers (and just about everything else Atari related), adds:

"Be sure to check the baud rate on BOTH the ST and PC ends.

The PC defaults to 2400 baud, and I believe the ST defaults to 9600. A mismatch will prevent communications from taking place.

As a test, you should be able to type on one system and see the characters appear on the screen of the other system. (You won't see the characters "echo" on the screen of the system you're typing on unless you set the duplex to "half" or "local echo".)

If you see blocks or squiggles instead of the characters, it probably means a baud rate mismatch.

On the other hand, since you seem to be able to command the ST to start a transfer by clicking Receive File on the PC, perhaps the baud rates are OK after all.

Are you using the same File Transfer Protocol on both terminal programs..? Zmodem, Xmodem, etc..?

With "no flow control" set on BOTH ends, the basic null modem cable you described should work just fine, as long as the transfer speed isn't set too high.

This is one of those things that "should work"...

Ove Peter asks about installing TOS 2.06 ion his STE:

"I hope you can help me with a problem...

I am trying to install a TOS 2.06 in my 1040 STE, 4Megs.

The TOS is on two Rom chips, just like the old 1.60, but is 2 pins longer than the old (the sockets in my Atari do have that extra 2 pins, though, so installing physically is no problem).

Now, the problem is, when booting the 1040, the screen appears with a black block in the upper left corner where normally the Atari logo would appear. After that, before counting memory or doing anything, it bombs out with 3 Bombs and restarts instantly. Which results in an infinitive loop of course. I have bought TOS 2.06 two times to fit my other 1040 too, and the problem appears with both the 1040 and both TOS 2.06 I have.

Am I missing sth? I think it is possible to install 2.06 in an 1040 STE? Anybody seen this before?"

Steve Stupple tells Ove:

"You should be able to just switch the chips over without problems! Nothing else is really needed.

I'd check that other ic's in the computer haven't come loose, this does happen. If it does the same after replacing the original TOS chips then this is likely to be the cause."

Peter West adds:

"He should also check that all the pins of he PROMs have gone into their sockets properly. I had a problem with my upgrade some years

back - it worked only intermittently. On checking I found a couple of pins had *not* gone into the socket but had been bent inwards, though making intermittent contact. Removing them, straightening out the legs and reinserting more carefully did the trick!"

Hallvard Tangeraas tells Ove:

"Yes, it's possible to install TOS 2.06 in an STe, and yes, you're missing something.

I've installed TOS 2.06 in my STe without any problems.
What you've apparently missed is setting the jumpers.

Here's a text I wrote about it a while ago which explains what to do:

----- start -----

----- Rear of STe (power plug etc.) -----

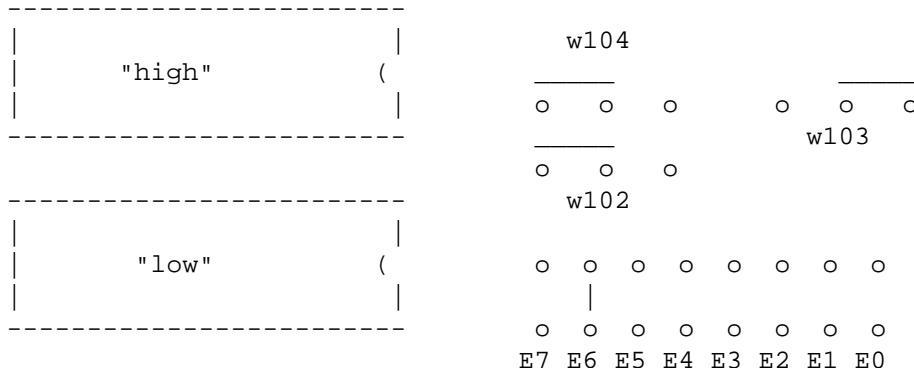
TOS 1.62 etc. ("short" chips)



"short" ROMs go up
to here ->

ROM sockets go up to
here ->

--
TOS 2.06 etc. ("long" ROMs)



sockets and the
"long" ROM chips
go up to here ->

^
(desktop HD format option)

----- Front (keyboard side) -----

IMPORTANT!!!! As the ROM chips in TOS 1.xx and 2.xx are electrically different you need to move the resistors/jumpers differently according to which type of chip you're using. My STe had resistors in place of jumpers, but the circuit papers from Atari simply show jumpers being used, so I guess this might vary from machine to machine.

I've also been told that the resistors are actually zero ohm resistors! Strange.... Well, use whatever's in your machine.

I'm referring to the positions marked "w102" and "w104" on the STe's circuit board.

Also, when changing over to TOS 2.xx you can join together the "E6" pads and gain access to a "high density" format option on the desktop with no additional software needed! Just select "format disk" from the desktop and you will have the choice of formatting the disk as single sided/double density and high density.

But I'd recommend against using the desktop formatter- it's not really MSDOS compatible, and it's sloooow! I use a shareware program called "Hcopy" instead, but there are several other excellent copy programs which support HD/DD disks and do it in MSDOS.

Still, it's cool to have the HD format option on your desktop when you select "format disk" ;-)

After having installed TOS 2.06 the machine will behave a little differently from older versions of TOS. First of all you'll get an Atari logo on the upper left hand corner of the screen, then a memory test will start- a long bar getting shorter and shorter. This takes ages to finish. You can skip it by pressing any key.

When the disk drive starts rotating you might be in for a shock (I know I was and I thought something was wrong- because I had nobody to tell me what I'm now telling you!!). The disk drive might make a lot more noise than before. But don't panic! This is due to the support of high density (1.44MB) disk drives and the step rate which has been altered to allow them to be used.

There are small programs available for this, that alter it back to the usual DD standard, and quietens down the drive (although the drive still seems to make more noise than in the previous TOS version).

One such program is "hd_fdc.prg" which goes in the auto folder. It's free and should be available many places. But there are a few other programs like this as well.

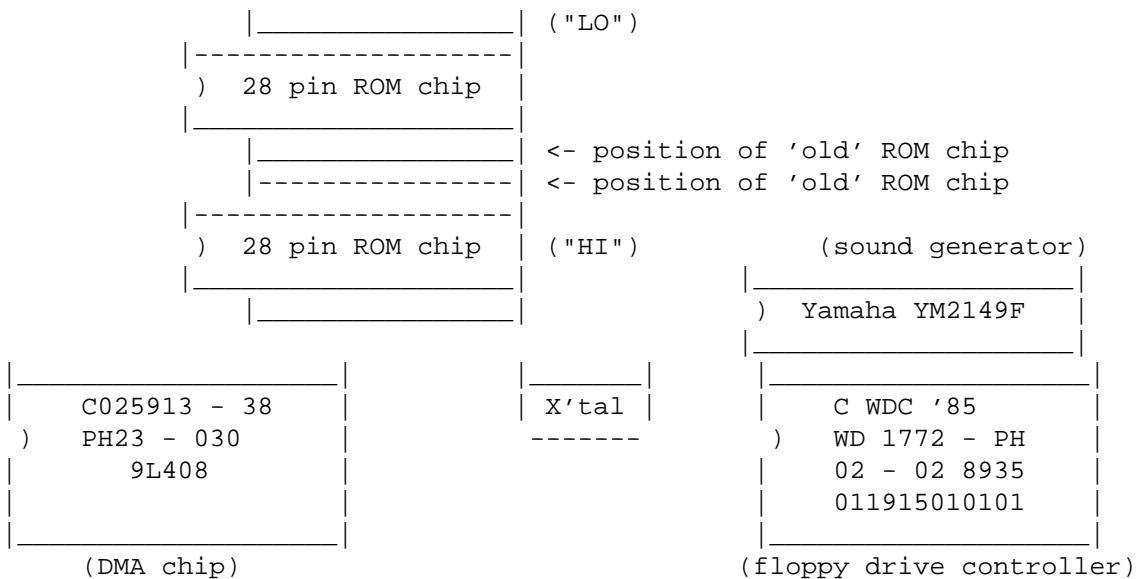
----- end -----

..... and as you already have your STe opened you might as well check the DMA chip, as some of the early STe machines came equipped with a dodgy one and needs to be replaced if you're using a hard disk (or else you'll get lots of read/write errors):

----- start -----

Hallvard Tangeraas, 29-August-1994

DMA, ROM chips etc. for Atari STE computer



Faulty DMA chips (source: ST Format, p.56)

** Faulty DMA chip in early STEs;

C025913 - 38 PH23 - 001A

** Good chips (most STEs);

C398739 - 001A (Atari-1990)-31

Well folks, that's it for this week. I realize that Hallvard's last post was a bit lengthy, but it's one of the best descriptions I've ever seen, so I thought it was worth including.

Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~ =~ =~ =

->In This Week's Gaming Section - 'Motor Mayhem'! CyberX-3D!
 ===== Final Fantasy Chronicles!
 'NFL GameDay 2002'!
 And much more!

=~ =~ =~ =

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

=====

Infogrames, Inc. Crashes Into Stores on Sony PlayStation 2 With Motor Mayhem

Let's get ready to CRUMBLE! Infogrames, Inc. announced that Motor Mayhem, the raucous over-the-top vehicular combat game for PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, began shipping to stores this week. Players take the role of super-powered contestants in heavily armed custom vehicles, battling against each other in the futuristic Vehicle Combat League (VCL). Only the fiercest competitors will survive to fight in the championship tournament, Motor Mayhem. Get in the game or get run over!

"Motor Mayhem captures all the raw, blood-pumping adrenaline found in extreme league sports and brings it right into the player's living room," said Laddie Ervin, director of marketing for Infogrames, Inc.'s Los Angeles label. "With a rich game universe, explosive, fun gameplay, well-developed characters, stunning graphics and a totally destructible environment, Motor Mayhem offers players a totally unique gaming experience."

Much like today's National Football League, National Basketball Association or Major League Baseball, in the not-too-distant future, there exists a league for professional vehicle combat. The year is 2025, and vehicle combat has skyrocketed in popularity since the VCL introduced the sport in which combat-trained athletes in highly modified vehicles demolish each other in colossal arenas to become the ultimate fighting champion.

VCL competitors will choose from nine outlandish characters, each with their own personality, fighting style and weaponry and can choose from eight vast multi-stage arenas. Players can select such unique characters as Grok, the rock creature on his highly modified steamroller, Rancor, the serpent/human hybrid on his scorpion rig, Buzzsaw, the product of bionic exoskeletal research on his halftrack-style bladed tractor, and more. Motor Mayhem characters are intensely animated in their vehicles and players control them as they pilot their rigs, deploy spectacular special attacks, and demolish huge interactive combat arenas. In addition, elaborate modifications can be made to the combat vehicles and characters can upgrade their personal armament to give them an edge over their opponents. Players can choose from an arsenal of weaponry including missiles, heavy artillery, mines, and more to blast away their opposition.

Tournaments will take place in eight action-packed, reality-based locations including an aircraft carrier, a major international airport, industrial sites, and more. Arenas are carved out of hyper-realistic and highly animated locations, featuring destructible architecture; elaborate traps players can deploy against each other; and detailed environmental effects.

Motor Mayhem features multiple game modes including Championship, Endurance, Last Man Standing and Quick Start. Choose from raucous single player action or 2-player split-screen mayhem, and get ready for the ride of your life!

Developed by Salt Lake City based Beyond Games Inc. on their next generation Brainstorm Engine, Motor Mayhem features breathtaking special effects including demolition physics, completely animated vehicles, over the top explosions and weapon effects, dynamic lighting and detailed destructible environments. Motor Mayhem can be found at most major retail stores this week for an estimated retail price of \$49.95.

Square's FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES for the PlayStation Game Console Hits Retail Shelves

Special Packaged Set Features FINAL FANTASY IV and CHRONO TRIGGER

Square Electronic Arts L.L.C. announced the release of FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES for the PlayStation game console. FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES is a special packaged set consisting of updated versions of Square's classic role-playing games FINAL FANTASY IV and CHRONO TRIGGER, originally released in North America for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) in 1991 and 1995, respectively.

"Both FINAL FANTASY IV and CHRONO TRIGGER are widely considered groundbreaking titles that changed the standard for role-playing games," said Jun Iwasaki, president of Square Electronic Arts. "We have added a variety of new features to both games for this compilation and are greatly pleased to reintroduce these two classic titles to our North American fans on the PlayStation game console."

The FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES collection enhances the experience of the original games with new opening and closing cinematic sequences, which boost the emotional impact of the characters and environments. The new FINAL FANTASY IV now incorporates a two-player mode that allows players to participate in battles together, and a "dash" feature, that permits players to progress more quickly through various locales. It also features a completely new and improved localization of the original unedited story and slips in numerous monsters, abilities, items and scenes that were not in the original SNES version. The updated CHRONO TRIGGER also features cinematic re-creations of memorable sequences, answering lingering questions and offering some insight into the game's popular successor, CHRONO CROSS.

FINAL FANTASY IV was originally released on the SNES in 1991 as FINAL FANTASY II and was the first game to feature the innovative Active Time Battle (ATB) system, an element which greatly advanced the feel of actual battle and has become a staple of many role-playing games since then. It is a vast and sprawling adventure with a rich storyline in the famous tradition of the FINAL FANTASY franchise, the best-selling series in the history of video games. FINAL FANTASY IV was released for the PlayStation game console in Japan in 1997, but this is the first time that the title will be available for the PlayStation game console in North America.

CHRONO TRIGGER was originally released on the SNES in 1995 and is a time-traveling quest filled with colorful characters and exciting exploits. The result of an unprecedented collaboration between Hironobu Sakaguchi (FINAL FANTASY series), Yuji Horii (Dragon Quest) and Akira Toriyama (Dragon Ball Z), the title was quickly dubbed the "Dream Project" and was one of the most highly anticipated RPGs of all time, selling a record-breaking 2,500,000+ units in Japan in its original release. CHRONO TRIGGER was released for the PlayStation game console in Japan in 1999, but this is the first time that the title will be available for the PlayStation game console in North America.

FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES carries an ESRB rating of "T" (Teen). The suggested retail price is U.S. \$40.

**NFL Pro Bowl Quarterback Donovan McNabb Takes Aim
at the PlayStation2 Computer Entertainment
System as the Cover Athlete for NFL GameDay 2002**

Sony Computer Entertainment America announced that the most prolific professional athlete to take to the quarterback position, Donovan McNabb, has been signed as the cover athlete for NFL GameDay 2002 from the 989 Sports development team. A lethal combination of explosive offensive abilities both on the ground and through the air, Donovan McNabb personifies the brand of high-flying, intense football action of NFL GameDay 2002.

'Donovan McNabb exemplifies the tonality and competitive spirit of NFL GameDay 2002,' said Kelly Ryan, director, sports product development. 'He has the ability to step to the line of scrimmage and take over a game with his skill and sheer athletic ability. Whether he is scrambling out of the pocket and launching a touchdown pass or juiking a defender to pick up a first down, like NFL GameDay 2002, Donovan McNabb is unadulterated excitement on the gridiron and we are proud to have him on the cover of NFL GameDay 2002.'

Feared for his explosive offensive abilities on the ground and through the air, Donovan McNabb brings an unorthodox brand of creative playmaking and game-breaking skills to the field. While leading his team last year in passing and rushing yards, Donovan McNabb has in a brief time established himself as a player to be feared by opposing defenses and an NFL fan favorite. Hidden behind a Hollywood grin lies the world-class athletic ability that sets Donovan McNabb apart as one of the most athletic quarterbacks in professional football and a perfect model for NFL GameDay 2002's unparalleled football action.

Continuing the tradition of the PlayStation game console's original football franchise, NFL GameDay 2002 raises the bar this fall with intense football gameplay and exceptional NFL realism. NFL GameDay 2002 features a new, state-of-the-art animation engine and exclusive multiple player motion-capture technology, translating into the most powerful and realistic tackle sequences, drag downs and blocking animations. From the realistic graphics depicting players in amazing detail, to the array of on-field actions including gang tackles, 'shoestring' catches, drag down tackles and shoves, NFL GameDay 2002 truly captures the intensity of the NFL.

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates NFL GameDay 2002 'RP' for 'Rating Pending.'

**CyberExtruder Personalizes Two Top Video Games:
CyberX-3D Technology Enables Gamers to Put Their
Face in Best-Sellers 'The Sims' and 'Quake III: Arena'**

CyberExtruder Inc. has announced that players of 'The Sims' and 'Quake III: Arena' can now put their own faces in these best-selling video games. Using their CyberX-3D technology, a proprietary software and web-based technology that automatically converts a single two-dimensional facial image into a fully-developed 3D model in one second, players of these two leading games can become actual characters in the action.

CyberExtruder began marketing CyberX-3D technology to the \$20 billion

gaming industry earlier this year by enabling the top ranked game "Unreal Tournament". Since February, consumers have been able to convert their image and download a special UT game file at the CyberExtruder website (<http://www.cyberextruder.com>) -- for less than the cost of a music CD. According to CyberExtruder CEO Larry Gardner, other video game titles will be added prior to the holiday season.

Developed by CyberExtruder, CyberX-3D technology allows users to submit a single digitized photo of their face to a secure website. The image is automatically analyzed, distinct facial landmarks are identified, and a highly accurate 3D model of the user's face is created within just one second. A unique file is generated and returned to the user, which is then "read" by the video game software or other applications. Currently, visitors to the site can also preview up to 6 images at no charge, and download a free screensaver of their face in 3D, which can be manipulated with the click of a mouse.

This patent-pending process is built on a mathematical model based on an extensive database of actual 3D images of faces, which is combined with the company's automatic mapping software. What makes CyberX-3D technology a breakthrough is that it works from just one photo and is completely automated. It also requires no special hardware, which according to Gardner, is a "dramatic difference between our technology and Sony's recently announced Picture Paradise for their PlayStation 2 platform".

"In addition to only working for Sony's PS2 console," comments Gardner, "their approach requires the user to also purchase a compatible Sony camera and then manually manipulate the image with software embedded in the game." According to a Sony, the first compatible title containing Picture Paradise "middleware" is not scheduled for release until late this summer.

In addition to generating revenues from the video game industry, the company is in the process of securing licensing agreements for the use of CyberX-3D(TM) as a rich media development tool. CyberExtruder is also working with several leading technology companies to develop a facial animation product for instant message and chat, as well as e-commerce and CRM applications.

Sony's PlayStation 2: The 'Ultimate Weapon'?

The U.S. and Japan have reportedly asked Sony to halt plans that would have resulted in the PlayStation 2 game console being made in China. The request is due to fears that the DVD capability of the PS2 could be converted to military use, according to published reports.

Ironically, on the PlayStation Web site, Sony refers to the PlayStation 2 as "the ultimate weapon in the universe."

The two governments are pointing to the PlayStation 2's DVD ability as being possibly helpful to China's military. Sony in July was to begin receiving up to 400,000 game units each month from two Taiwanese outsourcers, says a report from that country.

Asustek Computer and Acer, which are outside manufacturers for Sony, both planned to produce some of the game consoles at plants based in China. Asustek now uses its Chinese plant to produce bare-bones desktop systems for Sony. Acer, Taiwan's top PC maker, began production of computer

components, including CD-ROM and DVD drives, in China last year, say reports.

With more than 10 million units sold since the PlayStation 2 game console was unveiled in March 2000, Sony had hoped to use the two manufacturers in Taiwan to compensate for its own inability to meet manufacturing demand.

In addition, as Microsoft plans to manufacture its Xbox game console in Taiwan, Sony may have hoped to preempt a significant portion of Taiwan's manufacturing capacity before Microsoft had a chance to gear up there.

In December, a Web site reported that a scarcity of PlayStation 2 consoles was partly due to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's use of the game machines. Some 4,000 of the game consoles found their way to Iraq, said the report.

While critics of the report doubted the practicality of linking hundreds of game consoles together to further a government's military ambitions, Michael Goodman, a senior analyst at Boston, Massachusetts-based Yankee Group, said the issue must be viewed a different way.

"Don't think of consoles, think of chips," Goodman told NewsFactor Network. "The danger is you are teaching [China] how to build" the processor, Goodman said.

Sony's 128-bit, 300 MHz "Emotion Engine" is equal to a mid-range Intel microprocessor, Goodman told NewsFactor. However, Goodman said it wasn't clear why Japan and the U.S. consider the PlayStation 2's DVD capability a threat. The PlayStation 2 does employ RSA encryption.

Last December, with reports of Hussein possibly using the game consoles for military purposes, an unnamed military source was quoted as saying that the PlayStation 2's graphic capabilities were more powerful than those of a graphics workstation and far exceeded that found in typical PCs.

The PlayStation 2 also comes equipped with a broadband Internet connection, industry sources report.

Before leaving office in January, President Clinton proposed lifting export controls on computer hardware. Then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Rudy DeLeon noted the ease with which rogue nations could connect a series of innocuous desktop PCs for use in military applications.

He concluded then that trying to control the export of technology by limiting hardware sales was not working.

At the same time, Japan lifted export controls for computer hardware, including the PlayStation 2. But in April 2000, Japanese officials restricted the export of the game console, saying its graphic processing unit could be used in guided missiles.

=~~=~~=

Songbird JagFest2K1 Report

I am thrilled that Songbird had a chance to attend JagFest2K1. My hat is off to Dan Loosen and company; he did a fantastic job of finding a great location, bringing in lots of interesting collections, and keeping the whole day running with all the tournaments planned. We had a record-breaking attendance of over 80 people. Nice job, Dan!

The GOAT Store and Songbird were the only two vendors I was aware of at JagFest. And really, that was plenty for the Atari systems, although I could see in the future more vendor coverage for other classic/neo-classic systems. Telegames had allowed me to vend some of their merchandise as well, so Songbird had three tables chock full of cool stuff, from Aircars to Rapid Fire Controllers (which were a hit, BTW!) to Lynx Champ Rally.

It was great to see all the cool collections... everyone hauled out their best and shiniest protos for display and play. Kevin Mosley is truly an Atari fan with that Lynx AvP cart! That's an absolute one-of-a-kind item you'll likely never see elsewhere. The Museum of Classic Gaming was incredible, I couldn't believe all the stuff in there. Thanks to Marty and company for making that possible! Terance brought a Gorf demo for the Jag, but unfortunately no one had a laptop with the Jag dev kit installed. An early alpha of OMC's Dark Guardian was there -- very nice, James! Looking forward to another cool shooter on the Jaguar.

The JagVR units were definitely a highlight of the show for me personally. I only tried it for five minutes, and it was jumpy due to all the handling that day, but to think that Atari had pioneered VR for a home system is incredible. The responsiveness of the unit and the speed of the game were quite impressive. Thanks to Ted and Clint for making this possible!

The 10-player BattleSphere network was another highlight. They spent a LONG time trying to get it to work -- so long, that I was encouraging them just to live with only 8 or 9 Jags networked. But their perseverance paid off, and everyone cheered and clapped when it all got running. This is the kind of thing you will only see at JagFest.

Thanks to Dan's family for providing all the food at a reasonable cost for the event, I surely appreciated it!

I loved the tournaments. We fell behind schedule at times, and some people had to leave early which kept them from participating, but it was a lot of fun seeing PONX and Champ Rally and Protector SE being put through the paces. A lot of people are still impressed at how much fun PONX is (it's the best selling Songbird Lynx game, BTW), and Champ Rally is quickly becoming a Lynx favorite as well.

I got lots of good feedback on Protector SE. Several people asked throughout the day if I had added new layers of scrolling to the game, and I hadn't! It was just the new graphics -- all modesty aside, they really turn the game into a graphical knockout, and everything stands out so much more. People also liked the gameplay adjustments; anyone who has complained the game gets too hard too fast will be pleasantly surprised with the easy pace of the first 10 levels or so.

The CD Bypass announcement was the Songbird highlight for the show. I

gathered everybody around and showed them a BHH CD, which, since it's unencrypted, won't boot up on a regular Jag CD unit. I then inserted a Protector SE cartridge, and after a couple of tries, the CD did boot up and start playing. I explained that once Prot SE is released, anyone who knows their Jag programming stuff should be able to burn and release new games on CDs. You can even turn an unmodified Jag/CD combo into a developer system. No custom chips or cables necessary, just Prot SE on cart! This is a cool and exciting development for the Jag community, and I sincerely hope any current or aspiring Jag developer out there will take advantage of this to self-publish their upcoming games or work with Songbird to do the same.

Finally, I didn't play a single game at the fest. The only exception was a couple seconds here and there, to show off a Rapid Fire Controller or help someone learn Total Carnage. But you know what? I still had a blast. Why, you ask? Because of the fans. You guys, the Atari Jaguar and Lynx fans, make these shows worthwhile. It is so much fun to rub shoulders with such incredible, dedicated, and friendly fans. I love answering questions (when I know the answers :)) to why such-and-such was never released, or do you know which company worked on this game, or are there cheats you haven't published yet, what is Songbird working on next, etc. It was great to see the familiar faces, and meet lots of new people as well. Meeting and talking with the fans is really what makes JagFest such an incredibly unique opportunity. I'm already looking forward to next year's fest.

To everyone, organizers and fans alike, who made this year's JagFest possible, a sincerest thank you from Carl Forhan at Songbird Productions. Let's keep the Jaguar and Lynx alive for another five years.

- Atari Anniversary Edition -
(c)1997-2001 - Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
all rights reserved - <http://www.icwhen.com>
(Revised 06/30/01)

[Atari Anniversary Edition]

Saturday, June 30, 2001 -- I see it as irony that Infogrames (www.infogrames.com) released Atari Anniversary Edition within days of MCV UK's (www.mcvuk.com) interview with Mr. Bruno Bonnell, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Infogrames. In the interview, Bonnell speaks to rumors that Infogrames may formally change their name from Infogrames to Atari.

Hasbro used the Atari name as a classic arcade brand, but we're going the other way", declares Bonnell. "If Atari decided to launch as a company today, it wouldn't do PONG. It would do a leading edge game.

Perhaps that is why I could not find a Web site address printed on the packaging or in the manuals for Atari Anniversary Edition. Nor could I find this product on Infogrames' site when I went to visit. Maybe Hasbro Interactive (whose Web site is undergoing "routine maintenance" as I write this report) had completed this product just before Infogrames acquired them. Perhaps Infogrames is ashamed of the product (hopefully not) and just wants to try to recoup the investment placed on the books for development.

I guess it sounds as if I am trying to make a point. In truth, I am not sure what point to make. Do I tell classic gamers and patrons of family

entertainment this product is great? Alternatively, do I tell the Infogrames' target audience, the hard core gaming market, that they probably won't like Atari Anniversary Edition. After all, there are no 'leading edge', push-the-envelope effects. There are no new-millennium, next-generation graphics. There are no new benchmarks being established for the new technology game player.

But the hard-core gamer does not represent the overwhelming larger market of Everyone Else. What Atari Anniversary Edition does do is faithfully recreate twelve of the industry's most beloved video games for the Personal Computer or Sega Dreamcast game system. The games included in this package are Asteroids, Asteroids Deluxe, Battlezone, Centipede, Crystal Castles, Gravitar, Millipede, Missile Command, Pong, Super Breakout, Tempest and Warlords.

If the CEO of Infogrames had not made it clear that his target market is only gamers interested in cutting edge, I would spend ample time to discuss the wonderful features of Atari Anniversary Edition. There is an exclusive interview with Atari founder, Mr. Nolan Bushnell. There are images of memorabilia and embedded trivia. There are tributes in the manual to a number classic gaming activists including Mr. John Hardie, Mr. Jerry Jessop, Mr. Leonard Herman, Mr. Keith Feinstein, Mr. Mike Mika and Mr. Sean Kelly. I found that the PC version installs flawlessly and I found that the added content duly pays tribute to a name that will always be associated to the world's favorite classic titles; Atari.

Based on Bonnell's recent comments in MCV UK, Atari Anniversary Edition may be more than a tribute to Atari. It may also represent the cloud of dust that Hasbro Interactive leaves behind as Infogrames establishes Atari as a maker of leading edge software in the future.

I guess we'll see.

Update from ICWhen.com

Of special note in the classic gaming community from www.ICWhen.com:

-- Classic Gaming Expo is creeping up fast. Make sure you check it out and attend in Vegas if you can. A lot of classic gaming personalities attend this show. It's a wonderful opportunity to view early prototypes, ask the insiders insider questions and get great buys on collectables as well as new releases. Visit www.cgexpo.com for more information.

-- The illustrious Jerry Jessop has put a very rare Atari 2700 prototype up for auction on eBay. Here's a chance to own an authentic classic gaming artifact. For information about this piece or to actually bid on this item, visit: <http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=1249640557>. There's just under 4 days left to bid. You may have found this auction already if you have ICWhen's eBay Navigator bookmarked in your browser. The URL is: http://www.icwhen.com/ebay_nav.html.

-- Infogrames is imminently poised to release Atari "Anniversary Edition" for the Dreamcast and the PC. The product is great, but..., well read my comments here:

<http://www.icwhen.com/news/2001-06-30%20Atari%20Anniversary%20Edition.html>

-- If you own a Nokia 8260 cell phone, you may or may not know that you can

send custom ringtones and group graphics to it virtually free. I've assembled classic gaming related tones and graphics as well as a way to easily transmit them to your phone. (If you want, I'll even make a custom graphic of your company logo, school name, etc.) Visit <http://www.icwhen.com/nokia8260/index.html> for more information.

-- VM Labs has just unveiled an e-store on their site. Go there now and order Space Invaders XL for the new NUON enhanced interactive DVD players on the market. Best Buy has two models in stock now; the Toshiba SD-2300 and the Samsung N-501. Both are very cool. Visit the official NUON web site for more information at www.nuon.tv.

To all those State side, have a great 4th!

Best Wishes,

-- Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
curator@icwhen.com
<http://www.icwhen.com>
ICQ: 14183819 - YAHOO!: DATJ
FAX: (815) 366-2336

=~=-~=-

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Intel Unveils Fastest Chips, Sees 2 Gigahertz Soon

Intel Corp. on Monday introduced its two fastest chips, running at 1.6 billion and 1.8 billion cycles per second, and said that the company would offer a 2 gigahertz chip later this quarter.

The world's largest maker of chips used to power computers said that based on robust yields -- or the success it was having in manufacturing new chips with few defects -- the company plans to accelerate the timing of the release of its 2 gigahertz chip to sometime during the current third quarter.

The new Pentium 4 chips running at 1.6 gigahertz and 1.8 gigahertz, or billions of cycles per second, are designed to power the world's fastest desktop personal computers.

Pentium 4 chips are geared to business users that run the latest data-intensive software programs and for consumer PC users who run demanding digital video and audio and three-dimensional graphics used in advanced video games.

The Pentium 4 1.8 gigahertz chip is priced at \$562 in quantities of 1,000, while the 1.6 gigahertz version is priced at \$294, again in quantities of 1,000.

AOL 7.0 Released For Beta Testing

Beta testers can now get a first look at America Online Inc.'s latest project, AOL 7.0, at Keyword: Beta. The new client, code-named Taz, was made available to AOL's registered beta testers on Friday.

While at first glance the software bears a striking resemblance to AOL 6.0, there are some changes in this early beta. Most of the new features appear to be minor, as AOL appears to want to retain the basic look and feel of AOL 6.0. (There is precedent for this; AOL 6.0 was quite different from 5.0, whereas AOL 5.0 was barely distinguishable from the previous version.)

For the first time, AOL members are able to view "away" messages of people on their buddy list without having to send a message first. AOL Instant Messenger users have long been able to view away messages by choosing to view the user's profile. An idle indicator has also been added, displaying the familiar yellow notepad icon to the left of users' screen names that are idle, just as it does when they are set as "away."

Additionally, users can tell if other AOL members are online through an icon next to their screen name in e-mails. This feature, previously called "Mail Contacts," allows members to tell if the sender or recipients of an e-mail they are reading are online for instant messaging or chat. With the "Mail Contacts" feature in AOL 6.0, a new group would appear on members' buddy lists with the buddies from an e-mail automatically added and removed as e-mails were opened and closed.

Elsewhere on the instant messaging front, AOL 7.0 offers a feature similar to AutoComplete on Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer. As a screen name is typed in the "To:" field of an IM, a box pops up offering possible complete screen names based on the names in a member's AOL Address Book.

A new option has also been added to the bottom of instant message windows. Clicking "Add Another Buddy to this Conversation" opens up an invitation to create a Buddy Chat with several AOL or AIM users. This feature allows several members to communicate in a private chat room.

The "Welcome" screen has also been updated with minor cosmetic changes.

System requirements for AOL 7.0 are about the same as for AOL 6.0. On Windows 95 or 98, both clients require about 130MB of hard drive space, Pentium processors or better, and 16MB of RAM.

Still absent from the AOL 7.0 beta is the so-called Komodo browser interface, which has been tested in alpha versions of CompuServe 2000 7.0. Komodo allows the embedded browser in the AOL or CompuServe software to be AOL's own Netscape as opposed to Internet Explorer. Since AOL acquired Netscape in 1998, it has been widely speculated that Netscape would replace Internet Explorer as the internal browser in AOL software.

AOL 7.0 is expected to be released in August.

Apple Computer Inc.'s ultramodern Cube computer became an antique on Tuesday when the icon of stylish computers abandoned the PC that consistently failed to meet sales hopes.

Apple said it had suspended production, and although there was a small chance it would reintroduce an upgraded model, it had no plans to do so.

It had upgraded the Cube at least once already, but the tiny translucent plastic box dropped off the charts rather than becoming a crossover hit between consumers and creative professionals.

The Cube got many rave reviews when it debuted last year, but some buyers called it square when the housing developed a fine web of cracks that Apple said were mold marks that were beautiful like wood grain.

High-end users who liked the top of the line Power Mac G4 microchip were disappointed that the form's function did not include an internal disk drive at the start.

Apple cut the price more than once, replaced machines with the mold marks for those who were "upset with less than perfection," as Chief Executive Steve Jobs once said, and added a CD read/write drive, to no avail.

The Cube accounted for only 12,000 of Apple's 751,000 units sold in its second quarter, which ended in March.

"Cube owners love their Cubes, but most customers decided to buy our powerful Power Mac G4 minitowers instead," said Philip Schiller, Apple's vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing, in a statement.

Apple also revealed a sense of humor about the matter, announcing the production halt under the headline, "Apple Puts Power Mac G4 Cube on Ice".

German Utility Launches Powerline Internet Access

German utility giant RWE said on Monday it had launched its powerline technology service which delivers high-speed Internet access by sending data through electricity cables.

RWE hopes for rapid expansion of the new product, called RWE PowerNet, now that Germany has passed new laws setting out the framework for the use of the technology.

"We aim to win 20,000 customers by year-end," Michael Laskowski, managing director of RWE Powerline GmbH told Reuters in an interview.

He said RWE PowerNet was launched on Sunday in Muehlheim and in RWE's home town of Essen, in Germany's industrial heartland, or Ruhr region. It would be offered in more Ruhr cities in the region in the second half of this year and in the Bonn area. Besides using existing electric plug sockets, powerline promises speeds of up to two million bytes per second, or more than three times the speed of latest phone connections promoted by Deutsche Telekom.

RWE Powerline, a unit of RWE distribution arm RWE Plus, planned to offer

the technology over the next three years across its distribution region in west Germany, Laskowski said.

RWE Powerline spokesman Andreas Preuss said 7,000 customers in Essen and Muehlheim had already registered their interest and Cologne was the next city to be targeted.

The company has a target of signing up 100,000 powerline customers in 2002, he added.

Advances in the technology over the last few years had been slow, yet analysts think if successful, it might change the telecommunications landscape to the benefit of utilities.

Germany's parliament in March approved three laws setting out the conditions for powerline operations which come into force July 1.

They ensure, for example, that the system does not interfere with electrical appliances or radio frequencies needed for emergency services.

RWE charges customers according to the amount of data they receive, ranging between 49 and 249 marks a month.

For the entry level price of 49 marks per month, users may download 250 Megabytes of data. A typical picture sent via email uses around 0.5 Megabytes.

The utility will compete with other high-speed internet connections to the home such as television cable and super-charged copper telephone wires known as asymmetric digital subscriber lines (ADSL).

Deutsche Telekom in March said it had sold 850,000 broadband ADSL lines and installed 400,000, with subscribers paying 65 marks a month.

Laskowski dismissed concerns over possible hardware shortages which have been mentioned by analysts.

Switzerland's Ascom (ASCZ.S) will provide the modem needed inside a consumer's home to get the signals from the electricity cable into the computer.

Laskowski also said RWE was testing powerline in a field trial in Brazil.

Apple Releases AppleWorks 6.2 for OS X

Apple announced an update to AppleWorks, the company's productivity suite of applications. AppleWorks includes a spreadsheet, word processor, page layout, image manipulation, database and presentation package all rolled into one suite.

With the release of version 6.2 AppleWorks adds the ability to automatically create a document in PDF format for viewing and sharing over the Internet. In addition, AppleWorks 6.2 includes DataViz file translators, allowing users to open, save and share Microsoft Word and Excel documents.

"With its hallmark ease of use, AppleWorks is one of the most popular Mac

applications ever, and now it's the first productivity suite built to run on Mac OS X," said David Moody, Apple's senior director of Applications Marketing. "With downloads of the public preview topping 200,000, it's clear that Mac users are hungry to get AppleWorks' vast set of productivity features on the world's most advanced operating system."

AppleWorks 6.2 includes a version for Mac OS X and a version for Mac OS 8.1 or later. Minimum system requirements for both include a PowerPC-equipped Mac, 24MB of RAM with virtual memory set to at least 25MB, CD-ROM or DVD-ROM, QuickTime and an optional Internet connection for accessing Internet-based templates.

AppleWorks 6.2 is available through The Apple Store, at Apple's retail stores and through Authorized Apple Resellers for a suggested retail price of US\$79. AppleWorks 6.2 is available as a free update to AppleWorks 6 owners.

Microsoft Case Back in Play, and the Lobbying Heats Up

As federal and state prosecutors ponder what to do next with Microsoft, they have already come under enormous lobbying pressure from the company to settle quickly and from its rivals, most notably AOL Time Warner, to continue litigating.

The lobbying campaign was in full swing even before Thursday's decision by a federal court of appeals here, which vacated the order to break up Microsoft but also found that the company had engaged in a raft of anticompetitive practices in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act. It is now expected to intensify and to become, for the city's cadre of lawyers and lobbyists, one of the most lucrative fights of the year.

Legal experts said today that one virtue of the appeals court decision was that it provided a clear articulation of legal guidelines that could form the basis for a settlement. But the political and legal obstacles remain formidable, as does the wide gulf between the government and the company, based in Redmond, Wash.

After Thursday's decision, some state attorneys general said that a court should still consider breaking up Microsoft, while Microsoft executives said that the decision had so changed the state of play that they would no longer be willing to offer some of the concessions that they had accepted during the settlement talks that failed last year.

Part of the difficulty in handicapping the likelihood of a settlement is the murkiness surrounding which Bush administration officials will play the leading roles in determining whether to continue the litigation or settle.

During the Clinton administration, senior Justice Department and White House officials left the biggest decisions to Joel I. Klein, the head of the antitrust division, who had served early in the administration as a White House deputy counsel. Mr. Klein had the confidence of President Bill Clinton and was left alone by Attorney General Janet Reno in the prior round of settlement talks.

The new head of the antitrust division, Charles A. James, has been in office for barely two weeks and has had little time to establish the type

of relationship with President Bush or Attorney General John Ashcroft that Mr. Klein enjoyed with Mr. Clinton and Ms. Reno.

It was a sign of his status as the newcomer to the case that after the appeals court decision was announced on Thursday, Mr. James issued a brief statement, took no questions and left it to his staff to conduct a background briefing session with reporters. The appeals court decision provides the first test of whether he or other senior Justice Department officials will emerge to control the outcome of the case.

With no one in the government in clear control of a policy toward Microsoft, the company and AOL Time Warner, along with their surrogates, have been fiercely campaigning in Congress and before regulators in a largely behind-the-scenes battle over Microsoft's new operating system, Windows XP. But the campaigns have been closely related to the antitrust lawsuit, with both sides employing large teams of prominent law firms and lobbyists in the hopes of putting pressure on the Justice Department and state officials.

"The amount of lobbying and campaign contributions have skyrocketed in recent years, and will be increasing in leaps and bounds over the next few months as both sides pound each other hard and try to establish as many close relations with officials as they can," said Steven Weiss, a spokesman for the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan organization that examines the influence of money in politics.

In the last four years, Microsoft has catapulted its political activities from a tiny Washington operation to one of the most formidable lobbying and legal powerhouses in town. In the last two-year election cycle, the company and its employees were the fifth-largest political donors in the nation, giving some \$4.66 million, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, and another \$12 million to lobbyists. By contrast, when the case began seven years ago, the company and its senior executives had given a total of \$10,000 to the two political parties and \$33,000 to federal candidates and had one lobbyist on the company payroll.

Microsoft and its allies have hired a virtual dream team of lobbyists. They have included Haley Barbour, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee; Tom Downey, the former Democratic congressman from Long Island; Vin Webber, the former Republican congressman from Minnesota; Jack Quinn, the former White House counsel; Slade Gorton, the former senator from Washington; C. Boyden Gray, the White House counsel to former President George Bush and his law partner, Lloyd N. Cutler, a counsel to former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Clinton; and Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition and an adviser to President Bush.

On the other side, AOL Time Warner (which owns Netscape, the rival browser to Microsoft's Internet Explorer, and offers a number of other competing products and services) and its allies have spent comparable amounts and retained a list of luminaries. In the appeals case alone, the opponents of Microsoft retained three former United States solicitors general of widely different ideological stripes Walter E. Dellinger III, Robert H. Bork and Kenneth W. Starr and their large law firms to put pressure on the government to continue the lawsuit.

In the last election cycle, AOL and its executives contributed nearly \$2 million to federal campaigns and millions more in lobbying. Other Microsoft competitors have contributed nearly as much in political donations, evening the political matchup.

For all the efforts at perpetuating the litigation, legal experts said that the outlines of a potential settlement were now clear in light of the appeals decision, although there were some large political and legal roadblocks confronting Microsoft.

"The appeals court decision provides a clear road map for how to settle this case," said Robert E. Litan, a former top official in the antitrust division during the Clinton administration who is now a vice president and director of economic studies at the Brookings Institution. "You can go paragraph by paragraph and say, 'This is the problem, here's how to fix it.' "

Mr. Litan said that the Justice Department typically structured settlements in two parts. The first part seeks to correct past misconduct and the second part tries to "fence in" a defendant from future anticompetitive behavior.

On the first part, he said, the appeals opinion provides straightforward guidelines. The court, for instance, found that numerous licensing restrictions and agreements violated Section 2 of the Sherman Act, suggesting that a proper remedy would prohibit Microsoft from entering into such agreements in the future.

Far more difficult to resolve in a settlement would be the court's finding that the commingling of software code between Microsoft's operating system and its Web browser software violated the Sherman Act by maintaining a monopoly. The company is preparing to introduce a new operating system, Windows XP, that it has announced will commingle many kinds of new applications with the operating system.

While Mr. Litan said it would be relatively easy to draw up a settlement that "fences Microsoft in from future violations," some state prosecutors have expressed concerns that Windows XP, which is to be marketed formally in October, creates a new set of legal problems by welding a variety of new applications, like video and audio player programs, into the operating system.

Napster Suspends Service To Install Filters

Music downloading from Napster has been suspended, at least temporarily, while the file-swapping site installs filters in order to comply with a court order prohibiting the unauthorized exchange of copyrighted music.

"File transfers have been temporarily suspended while Napster upgrades the databases that support our new file identification technology," said a message posted on Napster's home page.

Because all previous versions of Napster software were disabled as part of the effort to comply with the injunction, Napster users are also being told to upgrade to version 2.0 beta 10.3 for Windows or version 1.0 beta 2 for the Mac.

"It will take some time for our new filtering technology to accurately identify files; so initially, the number of files available will drop," the Napster site said. "As more users upgrade to the new versions and more files are identified, more music will become available through Napster."

The new technology is being installed to comply with U.S. District Judge Marilyn Patel's order requiring Napster to block copyrighted songs from being traded on its service. Judge Patel's order was upheld by the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on June 22nd.

The latest version of Napster will use "digital fingerprint" technology, which compares the digital structure of the music to a database of music that the recording industry claims is copyrighted.

Although the filtering technology is necessary to keep Napster out of further litigation, it has caused the number of tunes available through the service to drop significantly.

Numbers released by Webnoize last week reveal that Napster users are now sharing an average of 1.5 songs a month, according to the report, compared to 220 songs during the month of February.

The number of users logging on to Napster is also falling. According to Webnoize, 320,000 users were logged on to the system June 27th, compared to an average of 1.57 million simultaneous users at Napster's February peak in popularity.

"By further reducing the music available through the current service, Napster has provided another nail in the coffin of the service consumers originally loved," Webnoize senior analyst Matt Bailey said. "With little music available now, users continue to drift away from Napster."

Napster is struggling to stay alive until it can transform itself into a legitimate fee-charging service. The Redwood City, California-based company has promised the music companies that it will have its subscription-based service by September.

To that end, Napster has signed agreements with a number of record companies and independent labels. Last week, it signed a worldwide licensing agreement with the UK's Association of Independent Music (AIM) and the Independent Music Companies Association (IMPALA).

The agreement authorizes Napster's use of hundreds of thousands of tracks belonging to over 150 independent record labels in Europe. The organizations said the deal would help ensure the future of Napster's file-sharing community.

In a separate deal announced in June, Napster will also be licensing technology and content from MusicNet, the subscription music service being launched by three major record labels and media provider RealNetworks.

Under the terms of that agreement, EMI, BMG Entertainment and Warner Music Group will allow their copyright-protected music to be delivered to Napster users -- but only "at such time as Napster is operating in a legal, non-infringing manner, and has successfully deployed a technology that accurately tracks the identity of files on the service."

MSN Messenger Users Cite Spotty Service

Microsoft on Thursday continued to search for the cause of sporadic access problems and disappearing "buddy lists" affecting its MSN Messenger

service.

E-mail sent to CNET News.com from MSN members indicates a sporadic outage started Tuesday that could be linked to Microsoft's Passport authentication system.

Beginning Tuesday, many MSN Messenger users said they found their buddy lists of friends on the service had been wiped clean and that they could not keep constant connections to the service.

A Microsoft representative said the company is aware of the problem but has not identified the cause. The problem appears to be widespread, with MSN Messenger users in the United States, Korea, Singapore and Chile reporting failed connections or missing buddy lists.

MSN Messenger uses Passport to log in to the service. Passport accounts are tied to an existing e-mail address. Informal testing conducted by CNET News.com found that some Passport accounts using e-mail addresses ending in non-Microsoft domains had lost their buddy lists. Some MSN Messenger accounts using Microsoft domains, such as msn.com, continued to function normally.

Some Hotmail users, such as Kevin Benson, network/PC support manager for South Carolina Parks, Recreation, also reported problems and missing buddy lists. Benson said MSN Messenger would not retain new names added to the list.

"When I add a user which requested to be added to my buddy lists, it added until I logged off and on again," he said. "The added user is now gone again."

Daniel Darnell, an MSN Messenger user from Virginia, said he experienced login problems through Wednesday before signing back on to the service around 5 p.m. PDT.

"But my entire buddy list was deleted, and I am supposed to have 14 buddies on my list," he said. "Before I went to bed I managed to add one of my buddies back, and this morning when I came on about (6 a.m.) he was gone."

MSN Messenger user Brad Taylor, from New York, said he "tried several times throughout the day" on Wednesday to connect to the service without success. He did, however, receive an e-mail in response to a technical support request placed with Microsoft.

"Recently, we encountered a technical problem that affected a small number of users on the specific system that contains your account; the problem affects the information that allows you to sign in to the MSN Messenger Service," the e-mail states. "I apologize for this unusually lengthy period of downtime, and assure you that we are trying to restore sign-in availability as soon as possible."

A Microsoft representative said, "We are aware users are currently experiencing delays logging in to MSN Messenger, missing their buddy lists, or are not able to log in to the service." The representative said the company has not discovered the source of the problem but is "working quickly to identify it."

Throughout Thursday morning, people continued to report a string of seemingly unrelated glitches, including lost Hotmail address books and

e-mail and missing MSN Calendar information. But one common thread all these services share is Passport authentication. In fact, some people could not access their Passport accounts.

Ray Bailey, information services manager for The Berquist Company, said that when he tried to log in, "I was told my Passport is bad, and I know that account is right."

Passport is the cornerstone of Microsoft's ambitious HailStorm initiative. The company envisions a single login allowing customers access to a variety of services and information, all delivered to a wide range of disparate devices including PCs, handhelds and cell phones.

Microsoft has been converting a number of its services over to Passport authentication. Late last month, for example, subscribers to the Microsoft Developer Network had to convert their logins to Passport accounts.

"It will be interesting to see if Microsoft Passport can handle the load," said Guernsey Research analyst Chris LeTocq.

The analyst also wondered if another expected load could be causing Microsoft problems. On Monday, the company issued the first preview release of Windows XP to about 100,000 people. Some of the features, including the new Windows Messenger, require Passport login.

"I'm wondering if the MSN Messenger outage had anything to do with Passport inclusion in Windows XP," LeTocq said.

The glitch comes as the instant-messaging wars intensify on all fronts. AOL Time Warner claims more than 100 million instant-messaging users, compared with Microsoft's 32 million. Microsoft has responded to AOL Time Warner's closed-network approach by setting out to make its messaging product more attractive.

The forthcoming Windows XP includes Windows Messenger--a hybrid of instant messaging, videoconferencing, Internet telephone calling and application sharing. Some analysts say many of the features are attractive enough that Windows Messenger could help drive XP sales.

Hackers May Profit From Spam

Several small Internet service providers have been shocked to see some of their most unlikely users turn into spammers. But it turns out the users are unwitting tools of a new virus that experts say is the first case they've seen of hackers finding a way to commercially exploit their skills.

The scheme - seemingly spread across desktops in the form of a virus - was tested by hackers throughout June, apparently to explore the possibility of infecting home machines with software that would generate unsolicited bulk e-mail without the knowledge of the machines' owners.

"I believe it was a dry run," said Michael Reaves, systems administrator at Adimpleo/FirstNetSecurity.com. Reaves' organization registered the first case of a "spamming trojan" on June 14, in the San Francisco Bay area, on Excite@Home's network. He believes a commercial version will soon be launched.

The virus was designed with a simple succession of points and clicks, using a widely available worm-writing tool such as The Visual Basic Worm Generator, experts believe. The virus carries a trojan - a piece of hacker software that installs itself on users' machines after an e-mail attachment is downloaded.

The trojan - nicknamed the spamming trojan for its function - then generates spam e-mails from users' accounts, using their names and targeting the people to whom they send e-mail. Got an e-mail from your grandmom advertising the services of an adult Web site? Don't get mad - her computer's been infected by the spamming trojan virus.

It's the unlikely nature of the users who turned into spammers overnight that caught network administrators' attention in the first place.

"I got an abuse report from somebody in Florida and was very surprised, because we run a very clear network and got just three abuse reports in three years," said Don Lashier, owner of Newport Internet in Oregon. "I checked into it, and the spammer was this middle-age woman we know well." Newport Internet has only 1,000 users, and Lashier knows many personally.

Further investigation revealed the user was unwittingly generating spam, seemingly advertising services on an adult Web site - with one caveat: The ad had no HyperText Transfer Protocol links, leading Lashier to believe a spamming trojan was being tested.

While individual users generate very little spam - three or four messages per day - Reaves believes the problem is amplified by the proliferation of distributed, remote systems management tools, which have been used in the past to launch denial-of-service attacks. This time, hackers could use the same topology to generate massive volumes of spam.

"Hackers now can make money," Reaves said.

Jupiter Research estimates the volume of opt-in e-mail will reach 268 billion messages by 2005, generating revenue of \$7.3 billion. Security experts say some of this cash is bound to end up in spammers' pockets.

The spamming trojan could be prevented by users installing filters to block spam and viruses or by ISPs taking measures to curb spam and increase security.

'Spamming Virus' Could Pose Double Threat

A new variety of computer virus is reportedly combining the Internet evils of hacking and spam to turn victims into the source of unwanted mass e-mail that makes money for hackers.

The "spamming trojan," as it is called by those who claim to have discovered and trapped the self-propagating worm, represents the first time that hackers can change their message or make a worm go dormant and the first time they can profit from their malicious code, according to Adimpreo chief technology officer Michael Reaves.

"This is a marriage of something that's never been done, and they're making money off it," Reaves told NewsFactor Network.

Other security experts, however, say the virus does not represent a new threat and doubt that hackers could profit from it, adding that the worm is probably easily identified and defended against by existing security and anti-spam software.

Reaves, an administrator with Plano, Texas-based Adimpleo and its site FirstNetSecurity.com, said he and other administrators had chanced upon the spamming trojan last month and were exchanging notes on the worm, which he believes is like none before it.

"They've never had the ability to change their message or go dormant," Reaves said. "And now money's involved. This is the first time the hacker children have been able to turn into Internet wolves because they can earn money on what they previously could only take credit for. Now the hacker can get paid."

Reaves said by exploiting common, established vulnerabilities, hackers could take control of systems -- making them "zombies" -- and then use the spreading capabilities of a computer worm to generate spam.

Security officials, however, doubted that hackers would be making money writing spamming trojans.

"If this latest trend is true, and that seems questionable, I'm not sure it would be very lucrative," said Vigilinx director of intelligence Jerry Freese.

"Spamming is a very old and well known problem, and many anti-spam features have been developed and incorporated into software packages that prevent it," Freese told NewsFactor.

McAfee.com virus research manager April Goostree agreed, saying that even if hackers could make money off the worm, it would not be much.

"The JS/Seeker virus was one that sort of worked that way by changing the infected person's [Internet Explorer] search page to something else," Goostree told NewsFactor.

"When you would type in a word to search by, it would take you to a site which paid a commission per search. It was only a penny, but I suppose a hacker could make enough for lunch if he really wanted to."

While the worm was reportedly created with common hacker tools available on the Internet, that makes it easier to identify and fight, according to security experts.

"We already know about the worm-generating kit, which is why we're able to protect people from it," McAfee's Goostree said.

Freese told NewsFactor that there have actually been a number of "spamming" trojans/viruses/worms in the past, including a March 2000 outbreak of a spoofed Microsoft message that posed as an anti-spamming utility from the software maker.

"Like most viruses, spamming can easily be stopped with updated anti-virus and other security software that normally runs at the server or ISP level to prevent users from spamming," Freese said.

Reaves, however, insisted the spamming will affect computer users and

networks when the hackers decide to attack.

"I think what we're seeing right now is embryonic and they're not prepared to turn it loose," he told NewsFactor. "I can be a hacker using other people's bandwidth and other people's equipment, send spam, and there's no flack coming back."

"It's a case of some zombie masters that are looking to have very fat bank accounts," Reaves added. "It will involve the feds at some point."

Other observers said regardless of its threat, the worm is a reminder that viruses -- and now spam -- are more likely to come from familiar sources since address books are commonly exploited.

The Search for the Family Tree Moves to the Web

The Internet with its scores of databases, easy access and relatively quick response time is helping many armchair historians gain glimpses into their pasts.

It took Ron Wild about 10 years of visiting genealogical libraries around the country, perusing microfilm and searching through dusty archives, to trace the family line of his wife, Eva Mary, six generations to her great-great-grandfather, Joel Calvin Taylor, a farmer, born in Constable, N.Y., in 1824.

It took Mr. Wild just a few hours recently to uncover the 44 previous generations.

All he had to do this time was log on to MyTrees.com, and after plugging in a set of family names he had accumulated over the last decade, he learned about Mrs. Wild's colonial ancestors in New England, most notably Jeremiah Whitney, a distinguished Englishman who landed in Plymouth, Mass., in 1635. Then he took those names, with others obtained from databases at FamilySearch.org, and further traced her family to 10th-century France, with ties to royalty.

"You want to search the hard way, it can take 20 hours just to find one event, one birth," said Mr. Wild, 61, of Toronto, a marketing director at Family Chronicle, a genealogical magazine. "The information was there all the time. I just didn't know how to find it."

The Internet with its scores of databases, easy access and relatively quick response time is helping many armchair historians gain glimpses into their pasts.

But novice researchers need to be careful. While genealogical Web sites are springing up all the time, most of their information is very limited. Researchers may have to visit several other sites, and some of the information they uncover may not always be accurate. And several sites charge for services that consumers can find free elsewhere.

Even a wildly popular Internet site, www.ellisisland.org, which offers free information on some 22 million immigrants entering New York's Ellis Island from 1892 to 1924, has its limitations.

Seasoned genealogists say the information, while useful and accurate, is

basic and serves only to prompt additional searches. And users may wait a long time for access to the information. Although the site's server has tripled its capacity since its April debut, Peg Zitko, a spokeswoman for the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, the nonprofit group that runs the site, still advises would-be users "to set your alarm clock for 2 a.m." The site couldn't handle the eight million hits it received on the first day, and the server crashed.

Site visitors can view manifests from the ship companies that transported the immigrants and learn a little bit about the passengers' plans, based on questionnaires they were required to fill out. (During my visit to the site, I learned that my grandfather, Owen Kilgannon, who arrived in this country from Liverpool, England, in 1920, had \$60 in his pocket and planned on staying in America "always.")

Other sites can take you back even further back to the family homeland or trace family members who did not come to this country through New York Harbor.

Much online information can be obtained free, like the data provided by the sites that Mr. Wild used. After all, cooperation is considered a hallmark among genealogists.

An increasing number of commercial sites, however, are charging for access to databases that they say are exclusive and will surely contain your relatives. But that is not always the case. Genealogists like to chuckle at companies that sell mass-produced coats of arms, supposedly based on a surname history; they say the lists of names provided rarely share common ancestry.

Some sites dazzle first-time users by turning up a few names and dates, only to dangle further information available by subscribing to the site, which in some cases could cost \$100 or so for an annual membership.

Eugene W. Olson, who runs a consumer watchdog group (www.compuright.org) that warns Internet users about questionable sites, says some of the genealogy sites that charge fees are linked to other companies' free Web sites.

Before buying a subscription to a site, he recommends checking its domain name with a service like Register.com or Network Solutions Inc.

"If you can't find at least a phone number for the owner of a site, don't bother buying anything from them," he said.

Consumers have many sites, however, from which to choose. Typing the word "genealogy" on the Excite.com search engine recently yielded 1,685,507 results. Genealogy Web sites can be broad-based, with extensive databases, or very small, with more specific databases.

Three of the largest sites FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com and Genealogy.com offer large databases of names and birth dates from sources like the Census Bureau and Social Security Administration. FamilySearch is run by the Mormon Church, which encourages its members to trace ancestors as a religious obligation and volunteered its services for the Ellis Island site.

The Mayflower Web Page (members.aol.com/calebj/mayflower.html) has lists with a few select ship passengers who happen to predate Ellis Island by a few centuries. And there are niche sites from just about every region and

country that can provide more specifics on ethnic origins.

The more family information you already have, the more narrow and successful your online search is likely to be. When it comes to differentiating your Aunt Myrtle from someone else's Aunt Myrtle, specific information, like a date of birth, hometown and middle initial, can be crucial.

"Talk to your relatives and get all the information you can," said Rahn Rampton, a spokesman for MyFamily, another large online genealogy company. "After you get your basic information from the broad sites, then you can start hitting those Norwegian message boards."

Genealogists say it is wise to begin by entering family names at the largest genealogy sites, all of which use those vast databases with billions of names from government sources. Much of the data is repetitive; nevertheless, it can provide essential starter information.

Genealogy software can also help, by organizing the information you will gather into a family-tree format. Many sites present search results imbedded in large lists; the software programs are intended to sort through them. Family Tree Maker is among the simplest and most popular. Developed by Genealogy.com, it is available for \$39.99. FamilySearch.org offers a free program called Personal Ancestral File. Another, more advanced program, the Master Genealogist, issued by Wholly Genes Software of Columbia, Md., starts at \$59. Some sites, like MyFamily.com, also offer family-tree programs that can be used at the site and printed out.

Online researchers learn quickly that in the world of genealogy, there is no such thing as one-stop shopping. So once you have used the larger genealogy sites, you can move on to more specific searches. Genealogists, however, stress knowing the source of the information: Does it come from the Ellis Island rolls, for example, from the 1880 census or from something less authoritative? Most sites disclose where they obtained their data say, from church records or census reports.

Most of the general sites offer easy access to beginners. But that is not always the case with sites that offer more specific information. Many of them presuppose a working knowledge of genealogy.

HeritageQuest.com, for example, a unit of SierraHome, offers only indexes for sale but few details about their contents. Still, anyone looking for a CD-ROM containing 1910 census information for Big Horn County, Wyo., can buy it there for \$19.95.

There are also free bulletin boards and sites with collaborative family trees, where other clan members or strangers chip in whatever information they have found. FamilyHistory.com allows users to work on their family trees in a chat room setting, where others may collaborate or initiate a discussion. RootsWeb.com, which has links to many search engines, online publications and other resources, also lets people share information.

"The most important thing about using the Internet is forming relationships with other people who have already compiled information you need," said Roland C. Carson, 70, a retired public relations executive from Baton Rouge, La.

Mr. Carson spent years at local libraries researching his mother's family line back to the 1600's. Using a RootsWeb.com mailing list, he met a Swedish man who found that Mr. Carson's grandfather, Charles Carlsson,

emigrated from Sweden at the age of 13.

Extensive links can also be found at MyTrees.com. Many names are already organized in family trees. And the site simultaneously searches FamilySearch.org and Origins.net for your entries. It has customized search engines that scour the Internet for name matches and deliver them in alphabetical order. Memberships cost \$100 a year, or \$15 a month. The site permits users to barter for a few free months, however, by submitting their own personal family data to the site.

Even the larger sites have some specialties. FamilySearch.org offers vast indexes of medieval family data, while Origins.net has exclusive access to certain databases in the British Isles and Europe, including government records dating to 1553, and Scottish birth, marriage and death registers.

Among smaller sites, accessgenealogy.com offers the 1835 Cherokee census, listing Cherokees who lived east of the Mississippi during that year. USGenWeb.com has information gathered from tombstones. And Christine's Genealogy Website (www.ccharity.com) contains more than 100 wills of New World slave owners in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Seasoned genealogists, however, suggest that amateurs try to confirm the information they find on the Web with outside sources church or cemetery records, for example.

"Just because it's online doesn't mean it's gospel," said Loretto D. Szucs, author of "The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy," (Ancestry, 1997) with Sandra H. Luebking.

Of course, there are still many traditionalists who live in Winnebagos and travel to distant places to do their genealogical research the old-fashioned way.

Ms. Szucs recommends several offline activities, like joining a genealogical society in the area where you are searching, taking classes or subscribing to publications on the subject.

But most of all, she suggests talking to as many people as possible.

"If your husband doesn't want to get in a Winnebago and vacation in Salt Lake City, you need people to talk with this about," she said. "Networking is priceless."

=~~=~~=

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without

the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of
Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do
not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All
material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.